

Nothing to Be Thankful for? Then, worship.

Psalm 100:1-5

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.

² *Serve the Lord with jubilation;*

Come before Him with rejoicing.

³ *Know that the Lord Himself is God;*

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

⁴ *Enter His gates with thanksgiving,*

And His courtyards with praise.

Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

⁵ *For the Lord is good;*

His mercy is everlasting

And His faithfulness is to all generations.

Introduction

My sermon this morning is for all God's people. However, it will be particularly beneficial to those folks who feel lousy with their lives, those who are depressed and even unthankful because nothing good is happening in their lives right now. The sermon is also good for those folks who struggle with one or two life issues that overshadow many other small joys. If you think you are one of them, I pray that the Lord would speak to your heart through my message. I sincerely hope that you will find a reason or two to be thankful to God despite the shadow of darkness you are going through right now.

Let me ask you this: if God is your physician, for your depression, what would He prescribe? He would give you a daily pill of worship. What is the best scriptural remedy for ungratefulness? Worship. What is the best spiritual antidote for fear and anxiety? Worship.

Worship is God's antidote for every dark situation in our lives. Why? Because in worship, we find out who we are, who God is, what He expects from us, and what He does for us. He loves us His children. He protects us and supplies all our needs. In worship, our focus is shifted from our problems to God. When we fix our eyes on the Lord, we will see how great and mighty our God is and how small our issues are. E.g. The higher we go up into the sky, the smaller the mountains become. In worship, we discover that the Almighty God is always with us who sees us through no matter how hard our life situation is. In worship, we find reasons to be thankful beyond our circumstances. Worship is the cure for all spiritual illnesses including ingratitude.

Content

Although our main topic this morning is thankfulness, I must touch the topic of worship before I talk about being thankful, because without the attitude of worship, we cannot truly stay thankful to the Lord. So, please bear with me and come along with me.

Have you ever said to yourself after worship services, “*I didn’t get anything from worship today.*” “*It was a waste of time.*” “*The service was too long, the sermon was boring...etc.*” We all are guilty of that to a certain degree, are we not?

Let me tell you why we fall into that mode. Because we focus on what we get from worship instead of what we give to God in worship. We tend to think, “*What’s in it for me?*” forgetting to ask, “*What can I bring to the Lord?*” We always ask, “*Did I have a good time today?*” forgetting to ask, “*Did I offer myself to the Lord today?*” Please remember that worship is an act of offering ourselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) before it is a means of receiving God’s blessings. Offering ourselves first, then receiving God’s blessings later. As you start asking yourself, “*What can I bring to the Lord in worship today?*” it will revolutionize your worship experiences. That’s what the Psalmist talks about in today’s text.

Psalm 100 reminds us of three elements that we must **bring** to God in worship. They are: *joyfulness, desire to know God, and thanksgiving.*

When we worship the Lord with joyfulness, desire to know Him, and thanksgiving, we will be blessed, and our hearts will be renewed with joy, strength, courage, and gratitude.

Let’s talk about them one by one.

First, **bring your joyfulness and gladness to the LORD.** Only the LORD is the proper object of our worship. He is the focus of our worship. Not us. Nothing else, but Him. Only Him, and to Him, we make a joyful shout. That’s why we raise our voices to praise His name with joyful songs. Note in verses 1-2, the words such as ‘shout **joyfully**,’ ‘**jubilation**,’ and ‘**rejoicing**’: *Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. ² Serve the Lord with jubilation; Come before Him with rejoicing.*

Next time, when you worship, try to praise God with joyful shouts and joyful hearts. Do not worry about carrying the tune. Remember, what matters is not the sound or shout. What really matters is your heart. Train your heart to be joyful, not gloomy, before the LORD whenever you come before Him to worship. Practice it every time you worship.

Next, **desire to gain the knowledge of God.** Prepare your heart ready to learn who God is, who you are, and what relationship you have with God through worship. Let me read verse 3 to you: ³ **Know** that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Jehovah the LORD is our God. We shall have no other gods before Him. We will worship and serve no other gods but Him. Worship Him only, because He is a jealous God (the 2nd Commandment).

It is the LORD who created us. Remember, we are God's creation. We didn't create ourselves. We are not the byproduct of evolution, either. The Scriptures declare, more than 40 times, that it is God who has created us by His careful plans and with His skillful hands— *we are fearfully and wonderfully made* (Psalm 139:14). *He has laid His hands on us* (Psalm 139:5). *He created our inmost being and knit us together in our mother's womb* (Psalm 139:13). His eyes saw our unformed body. *All the days ordained for us were written in His book* (Psalm 139:16). *He knows us in every single detail* (Psalm 139:1). Therefore, stop believing in the lie that you were an accident or that no one planned for your birth. Don't believe in the lie, either, that you are the byproduct of evolution. Never forget that it is God who created you--the same God who ordains your life--the same God who knows and loves you more than you ever know. That God we worship and serve.

We are His people. We have a covenant relationship with the LORD: He is our Protector and Provider. He is with us forever. In return, He commands us to be loyal and faithful to Him and serve Him only. He expects us to be faithful to Him as He always is to us. He is our Shepherd, and we are His sheep. Remember Psalm 23? *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul,.. He guides me in paths of righteousness, His rod and staff they comfort me,....."*

Every time you come to worship at church, be prepared to learn all this spiritual knowledge. *Know your God. Know who you are. Know your covenant with God.*

Finally, **bring your thanksgiving.** We are to enter God's gates (and His house) with thanksgiving and blessing of His name (v. 4). Remember what I said at the beginning of my sermon that my sermon is for all of us? If you feel so lousy that you say to God, *"There's nothing I can be thankful for!"* Or *"Lord, this thing kills me and my spirit of gratitude, and I cannot be truly thankful!"*

Listen carefully now. Verse 5: *⁵For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His faithfulness is to all generations.* Memorize it, because it gives us three reasons to be thankful beyond our circumstances, even when all things are bleak.

First, we can be thankful because **the LORD is good.** When you can't find anything to be thankful for to God, use this one. As often as you can. Declare to yourself, *"The LORD is good."* No matter what! Know that circumstances don't change God's goodness. He is the only One that is good. E.g. We love to say, *"God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good."* It doesn't mean that God is always good to us by making our life trouble free all the time. No, that's not what it means. Rather, it means that we praise the never-changing

goodness of God despite our circumstances. *God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good.* For that alone, He is worthy to be thanked.

Next, we can be thankful because **His mercy is everlasting**. When all things fail, still thank God for His mercy. His compassions never fail (Lamentations 3:22). He is always loving and kind to you. He never changes on this one. Notice here, the word ‘everlasting’—it means to ‘endure’ **forever**. His mercy, His love and His kindness never run out. They last forever and ever. How comforting to know that!

Thirdly, we can be thankful because **His faithfulness continues from generation to generation**. Great is His faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23). He is faithful to keep His promises even when we find ourselves unfaithful to Him (2 Timothy 2:13).

One more thing: Whenever you are unhappy with your life, please consider Job who lost all possessions, all his children, and even his own health. Despite all this, he didn’t blame God but worshiped Him in humility (Job 1:20, 22). About ten years ago, I had a heated argument with a close friend of mine. The discussion went so wrong that he stormed out on me. For the next six months, he never contacted me either by email or phone. He must have been pretty mad at me. So was I. During that time, I felt like a dark cloud hovering over me blocking all the sunlight from above. Almost at the same time, God reminded me of 1 Thessalonians 5:18—*be thankful in all circumstances, for it is God’s will for me!* So, I forced myself every day to thank Him for both good and bad things, *especially* this one. It wasn’t easy at first, but I did it anyway, because I didn’t want to go against God’s will. About six months into doing it, I began to see a breakthrough and a change in me: I stopped complaining and began to trust in the Lord and His goodness. Eventually, God gave me courage to initiate the reconciliation. Surprisingly, he accepted my offer and, in fact, admitted that he was too ashamed of his behavior to contact me first. Since then, we became good friends again. Praise God!

Conclusion

No reasons to be thankful? Feeling lousy about your life? **Take your eyes off** from your circumstances. **Fix your eyes**, instead, **on** the Lord and keep them there in worship (Psalm 16:8). Then, **train your heart** to continually thank God and declare as follows: *Lord, I offer my thanksgiving to You, even though I don’t feel like it. I keep my eyes on You. I choose to thank You because it is Your will. I choose to thank You for Your unchanging goodness. I choose to thank You not because all things are well, but because Your mercy endures forever. I am thankful to You no matter what because Your faithfulness endures forever.*

Keep doing it, folks, and you will see God’s power lift you out of your tough situations and you will remain thankful and joyful in the Lord.

Amen.